

## Practical application of salvation

### **FROM Sobriety ( RIGHT MIND )TO Illumination**

BY CYRIL NABIL

**"Through the fall our nature was stripped of divine illumination and resplendence. But the Logos of God had pity upon our disfigurement, and in His compassion He took our nature upon Himself. On Tabor He manifested it to His elect disciples clothed once again most brilliantly. He showed what we once were and what we shall become through Him in the age to come if we choose to live our present life, as far as possible, in accordance with His ways."**

**Gregory Palamas**

#### Introduction

At his creation, man was endowed with some "divine characteristics" in that he is God's "image and likeness".

According to St. Maximus the Confessor, these characteristics are "being" and "eternity" (which God possesses by nature, but gives also to man), and, earlier, St. Irenaeus of Lyons identified the "spirit" naturally belonging to man with the Holy Spirit. Consequently, man is not fully man unless he is in communion with God: He is "open upwards" and destined to share God's fellowship. However, because God remains absolutely transcendent in His essence, man's communion with Him has no limit. It never reaches an End, which would be a dead end. God is both transcendent and inexhaustible. Man's communion with Him can never be "closed" through exhaustion. This is the transcendence that Palamas defends, and sees as the most

central, the most positive and the most essential aspect not only of hesychasm, as a tradition of monastic spirituality, but as a basic element of the Christian faith as such: In Christ, man enters in communion not with "the God of the philosophers and the savants", but the One who – in human language – can only be called "more-than-God".

Since the Son of God, in his incomparable love for man, did not only unite His divine Hypostasis with our nature, by clothing Himself in a living body and a soul gifted with intelligence ... but also united himself ... with the human hypostases themselves, in mingling himself with each of the faithful by communion with his Holy Body, and since he becomes one single body with us (cf. Eph. 3:6), and makes us a temple of the undivided Divinity, for in the very body of Christ dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), how should he not illuminate those who commune worthily with the divine ray of His Body which is within us, lightening their souls, as He illumined the very bodies of the disciples on Mount Thabor? For, on the day of the Transfiguration, that Body, source of the light of grace, was not yet united with our bodies; it illuminated from outside those who worthily approached it, and sent the illumination into the soul by the intermediary of the physical eyes; but now, since it is mingled with us and exists in us, it illuminates the soul from within. 36

It is precisely because Palamas understands illumination in the framework of Orthodox Christology that he insists on the uncreated character of divine light: This uncreated light is the very divinity of Christ, shining through his humanity. If Christ is truly God, this light is authentically divine. The same Christological framework makes it inevitable to

distinguish between the transcendent essence, or nature of God, and His energies. Indeed, in Christ, His two natures — so precisely defined at Chalcedon as both "inseparable" and "unconfused" — remain distinct. Therefore, deification or communion between divinity and humanity does not imply a confusion of essences or natures. It remains nevertheless real communion between the Uncreated and His creature, and real deification — not by essence, but by energy. The humanity of Christ, "enhypostasized" by the Logos, is penetrated with divine energy, and Christ's body becomes the source of divine light and deification. It is "theurgic", that is, it communicates divine life to those who are "in Christ" and participate in the uncreated energies active in it.

A major spiritual and intellectual figure of Orthodox Byzantium, Gregory Palamas — monk, archbishop and eminent theologian — dedicated most of his active life to theological argument, centered on one basic truth: The living God is accessible to personal experience, because He shared His own life with humanity. Both his contemporaries and the later generations considered that the nine treatises composed by Palamas between 1338 and 1341 and entitled For the Defence of Those Who Practice Sacred Quietude (Hyper tōn hierōs hesychazontōn) are the most important of all his writings. Since they were published in three groups of three books to rebuke first the oral teaching, then the written polemics of the Calabrian philosopher Barlaam, they are frequently referred to as the Triads. The Greek term hesychia ("quietude") is found in monastic literature since the fourth century to designate the mode of life chosen by hermits, dedicated to contemplation and constant prayer. Such monks were also known for centuries as hesychasts. Barlaam

had denied the legitimacy of their spiritual methods and their claims to experience divine presence. Palamas stood up to defend them. The extensive excerpts from the Triads translated and published in this book introduce the reader into the very substance of religious experience of the Christian East.

The Synod of Constantinople in 1368, according to Fortescue, "canonized Palamas as a Father and Doctor of the Church." Fortescue continues: "So by the end of the fourteenth century Hesychasm had become a dogma of the Orthodox Church. It is so still. The interest in the question gradually died out, but ... the real distinction between God's essence and operation remains one more principle, though it is rarely insisted on now, in which the Orthodox differ from Catholics. Gregory Palamas is a saint to them.

The spirituality centered on the Jesus Prayer, which originated in eremitic monasticism and became a constant practice not only in cenobitic monasteries but also among the laity. Its simplicity and directness pointed at the essential content of the Christian faith and led to that personal experience of God without which – according to St. Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022)-there is no true Christianity.

In the late thirteenth century, some written "methods" of the Jesus Prayer also propose a breathing technique aimed at attaching prayer to a constant physiological element of human life: the act of inhaling air. The exact meaning of this technique, which has been compared to yoga, was often misunderstood – perhaps by some of its unsophisticated practitioners, and in any case by Barlaam, who attacked it violently. This explains one of the major themes of the Triads

of Palamas, which aimed at defining the role of the human body in prayer and, consequently, in a Christocentric conception of human life in its wholeness

In spite of the fact that the Triads were written as a polemical work, directed against the position of Barlaam the Calabrian in his controversy with the hesychast monks, it represents a major witness to the content and meaning of Christian experience. The author never speaks of that experience as being individually his own. He is certainly not a representative of any form of esoteric mysticism. Quite the contrary, his intention is to formulate an objective theological foundation justifying his brothers, the hesychast monks, in their understanding of prayer and in the pursuit of their avowed goal: the deification or theosis of man in Christ. The main concern of Palamas is to affirm that this goal is not reserved to isolated "mystics", but is, in fact, identical with the Christian faith itself and, therefore, offered to all the members of the Church, in virtue of their baptism.

It is also his contention that the entire Greek patristic tradition can be seen as an affirmation of the goal of theosis.

It is not astonishing, therefore, to find out that every year, on the first Sunday of Lent — also known as the "Sunday of Orthodoxy" — all Byzantine Orthodox churches resounded with formal and repeated anathemas against "those who follow the foolish opinions of the Hellenic disciplines" and particularly against those "who considered the ideas of Plato as truly existing" or believe (with Aristotle) in the eternity of matter.<sup>17</sup> These anathemas were first issued in the eleventh century on the occasion of the condemnation of the philosopher John Italos, but their inclusion in the liturgical

Synodikon of the Sunday of Orthodoxy gave them permanent significance.

. The Calabrian philosopher does believe also in an illumination of the mind, which leads to a vision of the divine Being. He is familiar with – and admiring of – the writings of Ps. Dionysius and of St. Maximus the Confessor, where a direct vision of God and deification are seen as the goal of Christian life. It remains, nevertheless, that a certain "knowledge of beings" (gnōsis tōn ontōn) is, for Barlaam, a condition for illumination, and it is this conditioning that led to his conflict with the monks and that is unacceptable to Palamas. If "knowledge", identified with secular education, is necessary to know God, what is the meaning of Matthew 11:25 ("You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes,") or of the references, so frequent in Palamas, 21 to Romans 1, or 1 Corinthians 1-2, about the "wisdom of this age" being "put to shame"?

However, for Palamas, this transcendent essence of God would be a philosophical abstraction if it did not possess "power", that is, "the faculties of knowing, of prescience, of creating" (p. 93). In other words, the God of Palamas is a living God, ultimately indescribable in the categories of essentialist Greek philosophy. He says so much himself, referring to the revelation of the divine Name to Moses on Mount Sinai: "When God was conversing with Moses," writes Palamas, "He did not say, 'I am the essence,' but 'I am the One Who is' (Ex. 3:14). Thus, it is not the One Who is Who derives from the essence, but essence that derives from Him, for it is He Who contains all being in Himself" (p. 98).

So, communion with God in Christ is real and immediate. It is not pantheistic absorption into the Divine however: Man, being "in -21- God", or rather "in Christ", preserves his full humanity, his freedom (he is required to "keep the commandments"), and he participates in a process that knows no end, because God, in His transcendent essence, is always "above" any given experience of Him. But man's communion is not with "created grace" only, but with God Himself. This is the meaning of the doctrine of the "uncreated energies", which, as we have seen earlier in this Introduction, is rooted in the Christological doctrine of "hypostatic union" as it was formulated in the East after Chalcedon particularly by St. Maximus the Confessor.

So, when the saints contemplate this divine light within themselves, seeing it by the divinising communion of the Spirit, through the mysterious visitation of perfecting illuminations – then they behold the garment of their deification, their mind being glorified and filled by the grace of the Word, beautiful beyond measure in His splendour; 11 just as the divinity of the Word on the mountain glorified with divine light the body conjoined to it. For "the glory which the Father gave Him", He Himself has given to those obedient to Him, as the Gospel says, and "He willed that they should be with Him and contemplate His glory". 12

On the other hand, the mind does not acquire it simply by elevating itself through negation. For, according to the teaching of the Fathers, every divine command and every sacred law has as its final limit purity of heart; every mode and aspect of prayer reaches its term in pure prayer; and every concept which strives from below towards the One Who transcends all and is separated from all comes to a halt

once detached from all created beings. However, it is erroneous to say that over and above the accomplishment of the divine commands, there is nothing but purity of heart.

There are other things, and many of them: There is the pledge of things promised in this life, and also the blessings of the life to come, which are rendered visible and accessible by this purity of heart. Thus, beyond prayer, there is the ineffable vision, and ecstasy in the vision, and the hidden mysteries. Similarly, beyond the stripping away of beings, or rather after the cessation [of our perceiving or thinking of them] accomplished not only in words, but in reality, there remains an unknowing which is beyond knowledge; though indeed a darkness, it is yet beyond radiance, and, as the great Denys says, it is in this dazzling darkness that the divine things are given to the saints.

But purity of the passionate part of the soul effectively liberates the mind from all things through impassibility, and unites it through prayer to the grace of the Spirit; and through this grace the mind comes to enjoy the divine effulgence, and acquires an angelic and godlike form.

Under the effect of the ecstasy, he forgets even prayer to God. It is this of which St. Isaac speaks, confirming the great and divine Gregory: "Prayer is the purity of the intellect which is produced with dread only from the light of the Holy Trinity." 39 And again, "Purity of spiritual mind is what allows the light of the Holy Trinity to shine forth at the time of prayer.... The mind then transcends prayer, and this state should not properly be called prayer, but a fruit of the pure prayer sent by the Holy Spirit. The mind does not pray a definite prayer, but finds itself in ecstasy in the midst of



incomprehensible realities. It is indeed an ignorance superior to knowledge."

One of the great masters teaches, "After the transgression, the inner man naturally is conformed to external forms." 57 Thus, the man who seeks to make his mind return to itself needs to propel it not only in a straight line but also in the circular motion that is infallible. 58 How should such a one not gain great profit if, instead of letting his eye roam hither and thither, he should fix it on his breast or on his navel, as a point of concentration? 59 For in this way, he will not only gather himself together externally, conforming as far as possible to -46- the inner movement he seeks for his mind; he will also, by disposing his body in such a position, recall into the interior of the heart a power which is ever flowing outwards through the faculty of sight. And if the power of the intelligible animal is situated at the centre of the belly, 60 since there the law of sin exercises its rule and gives it sustenance, why should we not place there "the law of the mind which combats" 61 this power, duly armed with prayer, so that the evil spirit who has been driven away thanks to the "bath of regeneration" 62 may not return to install himself there with seven other spirits even more evil, so that "the latter state becomes worse than the first"?

"Pay attention to yourself", says Moses, meaning, to the whole of yourself, not just a part. How? By the mind, evidently, for by no other instrument is it possible to be attentive to the whole of oneself. Place therefore this guard over your soul and body: It will easily deliver you from the evil passions of the body and soul. Maintain this watch, this attention, this self-control, or rather mount guard, be vigilant, keep watch! For it is thus that you will make the

disobedient flesh subject to the Spirit, and "there will no longer be a hidden word in your heart". "If the spirit of him who dominates" — that is to say, of the evil spirits and passions — "lifts himself up over you," says Scripture, "on no account shift your ground"; 66 in other words, never leave any part of your soul or any member of your body without surveillance.

For it is the case that if we cannot taste mental prayer, not even as it were with the slightest touch of our lips, and if we are dominated by passionate emotions, then we certainly stand in need of the physical suffering that comes from fasting, vigils and similar things, if we are to apply ourselves to prayer. This suffering alone mortifies the body's inclination to sin, and moderates and weakens the thoughts that provoke violent passions. Moreover, it is this which brings about within us the start of holy compunction, through which both the stain of past faults is done away and the divine favour especially attracted, and which disposes one towards prayer. For "God will not despise a bruised heart", as David says; and according to Gregory the Theologian, "God heals in no more certain way than through suffering." This is why the Lord taught us in the Gospels that prayer can do great things when combined with fasting.

... Impassibility does not consist in mortifying the passionate part of the soul, but in removing it from evil to good, and directing its energies towards divine things ... and the impassible man is one who no longer possesses any evil dispositions, but is rich in good ones, who is marked by the virtues, as men of passion are marked by evil pleasures; who has tamed his irascible and concupiscent appetites (which constitute the passionate part of the soul), to the faculties of

knowledge, judgement and reason in the soul, just as men of passion subject their reason to the passions. For it is the misuse of the powers of the soul which engenders the terrible passions, just as misuse of the knowledge of created things engenders the "wisdom which has become folly".

But if one uses these things properly, then through the knowledge of created things, spiritually understood, one will arrive at knowledge of God; and through the passionate part of the soul which has been orientated towards the end for which God created it, one will practise the corresponding virtues: with the concupiscent appetite, one will embrace charity, and with the irascible, one will practise patience. It is thus not the man who has killed the passionate part of his soul who has the preeminence, for such a one would have no momentum or activity to acquire a divine state and right dispositions and relationship with God; 114 but rather, the prize goes to him who has put that part of his soul under subjection, so that by its obedience to the mind, which is by nature appointed to rule, it may ever tend towards God, as is right, by the uninterrupted remembrance 115 of Him.

Thanks to this remembrance, he will come to possess a divine -54- disposition, and cause the soul to progress towards the highest state of all, the love of God. Through this love, he will accomplish the commandments of Him whom he loves, in accord with Scripture, and will put into practise and acquire a pure and perfect love for his neighbour, 116 something that cannot exist without impassibility.

Such is the way which leads through impassibility to perfect love, an excellent way which takes us to the heights. 117 It is most appropriate for those detached from the world, for

they are consecrated to God, and this union allows them continually to converse with Him with a pure mind. They easily reject the refuse of the evil passions, and preserve for themselves the treasure of love. As to those who live in the world, they must force themselves to use the things of this world in conformity with the commandments of God. Will not the passionate part of the soul, as a result of this violence, 118 be also brought to act according to the commandments? Such forcing, by dint of habituation, makes easy our acceptance of God's commandments, and transforms our changeable disposition into a fixed state. This condition brings about a steady hatred towards evil states and dispositions of soul; and hatred of evil duly produces the impassibility which in turn engenders love for the unique Good. Thus one must offer to God the passionate part of the soul, alive and active, that it may be a living sacrifice. As the Apostle said of our bodies, "I exhort you, by the mercy of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." 119 How can this be done? Our eyes must acquire a gentle glance, attractive to others, and conveying the mercy from on high (for it is written, "He who has a gentle look will receive grace"). 120 Similarly, our ears must be attentive to the divine instructions, not only to hear them, but (as David says) "to remember the commandments of God ... in order to perform them", 121 not becoming "a forgetful hearer, but fixing the gaze on the perfect law of liberty, pressing onwards, and acquiring blessedness in the accomplishment", as the apostolic brother of God teaches. 122 Our tongues, our hands and feet must likewise be at the service of the Divine Will. Is not such a practice of the commandments of God a common activity of body and soul, and how can such activity darken and blind the soul?

Gregory Palamas The Triads EDITED WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION BY JOHN MEYENDORFF  
TRANSLATION BY NICHOLAS GENDLE PREFACE BY  
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### **JESUS PRAYER IN THE HEART**

You know that we breathe our breath in and out, only because of our heart ... so, as I have said, sit down, recollect your mind, draw it—I am speaking of your mind—in your nostrils; that is the path the breath takes to reach the heart. Drive it, force it to go down to your heart with the air you are breathing in. When it is there, you will see the joy that follows: you will have nothing to regret. As a man who has been away from home for a long time cannot restrain his joy at seeing his wife and children again, so the spirit overflows with joy and unspeakable delights when it is united again to the soul. Next you must know that as long as your spirit abides there, you must not remain silent nor idle. Have no other occupation or meditation than the cry of: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!" Under no circumstances give yourself any rest. This practice protects your spirit from wandering and makes it impregnable and inaccessible to the suggestions of the enemy and lifts it up every day in love and desire for God.

Tr. in J. Meyendorff, St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality (Crestwood, N.Y.; St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), pp. 59-60.

### **Sobriety IN THE HOLY BIBLE**

**Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man**

1They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. <sup>a</sup> 2When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" 8For Jesus had said to him, "**Come out of this man, you impure spirit!**"

9Then Jesus asked him, "**What is your name?**"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." 10And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

11A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. 12The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." 13He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

14Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. 15When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons,

sitting there, dressed and in his right mind σωφρονοῦντα ;  
and they were afraid. [16](#)Those who had seen it told the  
people what had happened to the demon-possessed man —  
and told about the pigs as well. [17](#)Then the people began to  
plead with Jesus to leave their region.

### **Humble Service in the Body of Christ**

[3](#)For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do  
not think of yourself more highly ὑπερφρονεῖν than you  
ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment  
σωφρονεῖν, in accordance with the faith God has distributed  
to each of you. [4](#)For just as each of us has one body with  
many members, and these members do not all have the same  
function, [5](#)so in Christ we, though many, form one body,  
and each member belongs to all the others. [6](#)We have  
different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If  
your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with  
your <sup>a</sup> faith; [7](#)if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then  
teach; [8](#)if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is  
giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, <sup>b</sup> do it diligently;  
if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

### **Romans 12 : 3-8**

#### **The Ministry of Reconciliation**

[11](#)Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try  
to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope  
it is also plain πεφανερῶσθαι to your conscience  
συνειδήσεσιν. [12](#)We are not trying to commend ourselves to  
you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in  
us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is

seen rather than in what is in the heart. [13](#)If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind **σωφρονούμεν**, it is for you. [14](#)For Christ’s love compels **συνέχει** us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. [15](#)And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

[16](#)So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. [17](#)Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: <sup>a</sup> The old has gone, the new is here! [18](#)All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: [19](#)that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. [20](#)We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. [21](#)God made him who had no sin to be sin <sup>b</sup> for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## 2 Corinthians 5 :11-21

[13](#)Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober **διανοίας ὑμῶν νήφοντες**, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. [14](#)As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. [15](#)But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; [16](#)for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” <sup>a</sup>



## 1 Peter 1:13-16

7The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray **οὖν καὶ νήψατε εἰς προσευχάς.** 8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

## 1 Peter 4 : 7-11

6Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8Be alert and of sober mind **Νήψατε γρηγορήσατε ὁ.** Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

## 1 Peter 5 : 6-11

### The Day of the Lord

1Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober **νήφωμεν**. 7For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

### Final Instructions

12Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. 14And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened,

help the weak, be patient with everyone. [15](#)Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

[16](#)Rejoice always, [17](#)pray continually, [18](#)give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

[19](#)Do not quench the Spirit. [20](#)Do not treat prophecies with contempt [21](#)but test them all; hold on to what is good, [22](#)reject every kind of evil.

[23](#)May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [24](#)The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

[25](#)Brothers and sisters, pray for us. [26](#)Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. [27](#)I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

[28](#)The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

## **1 Thessalonians 5**

[1](#)In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: [2](#)Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction. [3](#)For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. [4](#)They will turn their ears away

from the truth and turn aside to myths. [5](#)But you, keep your head in all situations οὐ δὲ νῆφε ἐν πᾶσιν, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

## 2 Timothy 4

### Doing Good for the Sake of the Gospel

[1](#)You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. [2](#)Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

[3](#)Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. [4](#)Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, [5](#)to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

[6](#)Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. [7](#)In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness [8](#)and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

[9](#)Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, [10](#)and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted,

so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

[11](#)For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. [12](#)It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, [13](#)while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, [14](#)who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

[15](#)These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

### **Titus 2 : 1-15**

#### **SOBIRTY IN PRACTICE IN John Chrysostom**

Ver. 15. “Unto the pure,” he says, “all things are pure.”

Thou seest that this is said to a particular purpose.

“But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure.”

Things then are not clean or unclean from their own nature, but from the disposition of him who partakes of them.

“But even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

Ver. 16. “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.”

The swine therefore is clean. Why then was it forbidden as unclean? It was not unclean by nature; for, “all things are

pure." Nothing is more unclean than a fish, inasmuch as it even feeds upon human flesh. But it was permitted and considered clean. Nothing is more unclean than a bird, for it eats worms; or than a stag, which is said to have its name<sup>34</sup> from eating serpents. Yet all these were eaten. Why then was the swine forbidden, and many other things? Not because they were unclean, but to check excessive luxury. But had this been said, they would not have been persuaded; they were restrained therefore by the fear of uncleanness. For tell me, if we enquire nicely into these things, what is more unclean than wine; or than water, with which they mostly purified themselves? They touched not the dead, and yet they were cleansed by the dead, for the victim was dead, and with that they were cleansed. This therefore was a doctrine for children. In the composition of wine, does not dung form a part? For as the vine draws moisture from the earth, so does it from the dung that is thrown upon it. In short, if we wish to be very nice, everything is unclean, otherwise if we please not to be nice, nothing is unclean. Yet all things are pure. God made nothing unclean, for nothing is unclean, except sin only. For that reaches to the soul, and defiles it. Other uncleanness is human prejudice.

"But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

For how can there be anything unclean among the pure? But he that has a weak soul makes everything unclean, and if there be set abroad a scrupulous enquiry into what is clean or unclean, he will touch nothing. For even these things are not clean, I speak of fish, and other things, according to their notions; (for "their mind and conscience," he says, "is defiled,") but all are impure. Yet Paul says not so; he turns

the whole matter upon themselves. For nothing is unclean, he says, but themselves, their mind and their conscience; and nothing is more unclean than these;<sup>35</sup> but an evil will is unclean.

“They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

Chap. ii. ver. 1. “But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine.”

This then is uncleanness. They are themselves unclean. But be not thou silent on that account. Do thy part, although they may not receive thee. Advise and counsel them, though they may not be persuaded. Here he censures them more severely. For they who are mad imagine that nothing stands still, yet this arises not from the objects that are seen, but from the eyes that see. Because they are unsteady and giddy, they think that the earth turns round with them, which yet turns not, but stands firm. The derangement<sup>36</sup> is of their own state, not from any affection of the element. So it is here, when the soul is unclean, it thinks all things unclean. Therefore scrupulous observances are no mark of purity, but it is the part of purity to be bold in all things. For he that is pure by nature ventures upon all things, they that are defiled, upon nothing. This we may say against Marcion. Seest thou that it is a mark of purity to be superior to all defilement, to touch nothing implies impurity. This holds even with respect to God. That He assumed flesh is a proof of purity; if through fear He had not taken it, there would have been defilement. He who eats not things that seem unclean, is himself unclean and weak, he who eats, is neither. Let us not call such pure, they are the unclean. He is

pure, who dares to feed upon all things. All this caution we ought to exercise towards the things that defile the soul. For that is uncleanness, that is defilement. None of these things is so. Those who have a vitiated palate think what is set before them is unclean, but this is the effect of their disorder. It becomes us therefore to understand the nature of things pure, and things unclean.

Moral. What then is unclean? Sin, malice, covetousness, wickedness.<sup>37</sup> As it is written: "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings." (Isa. i. 16.) "Create in me a clean heart, O God." (Ps. li. 10.) "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing." (Isa. lli. 52.) These observances were emblems of purifications.<sup>38</sup> "Touch not a dead body," it is said. For sin is such, it is dead and offensive. "The leper is unclean." For sin is a leprosy, various and multiform. And that they had this meaning, appears from what follows. For if the leprosy is general, and overspreads the whole body, he is clean; if it is partial, he is unclean. Thus you see that what is various and changeable is the unclean thing. He again whose seed passes from him is unclean, consider one that is so in soul, casting away his seed. He who is uncircumcised is unclean. These things are not allegorical<sup>39</sup> but typical, for he who does not cut off the wickedness of his heart is the unclean person. He who worketh on the Sabbath is to be stoned, that is, he who is not at all times devoted to God, shall perish.<sup>40</sup> You see how many varieties of uncleanness there are. The woman in child-bed is unclean. Yet God made child-birth, and the seed of copulation. Why then is the woman unclean, unless something further was intimated? And what was this? He intended to produce piety in the soul, and to deter it from fornication. For if she is unclean who has borne a child,



much more she who has committed fornication. If to approach his own wife is not altogether pure, much less to have intercourse with the wife of another. He who attends a funeral is unclean, much more he who has mixed in war and slaughter. And many kinds of uncleanness would be found, if it were necessary to recount them all. But these things are not now required of us. But all is transferred to the soul.

For bodily things are nearer to us, from these therefore he introduced instruction. But it is not so now. For we ought not to be confined to figures, and shadows, but to adhere to the truth, and to uphold it: sin is the unclean thing. From that let us flee, from that let us abstain. "If thou comest near it, it will bite<sup>41</sup> thee." (Ecclus. xxi. 2.) Nothing is more unclean than covetousness. Whence is this manifest? From the facts themselves. For what does it not defile? the hands, the soul, the very house where the ill-gotten treasure is laid up. But the Jews consider this as nothing. And yet Moses carried off the bones of Joseph. Samson drank from the jawbone of an ass, and ate honey from the lion, and Elijah was nourished by ravens, and by a widow woman. And tell me, if we were to be precise about these things, what can be more unclean than our books, which are made of the skins of animals? The fornicator, then, is not the only one that is unclean, but others more than he, as the adulterer. But both the one and the other are unclean, not on account of the intercourse, (for according to that reasoning a man cohabiting with his own wife would be unclean,) but because of the wickedness of the act, and the injury done to his neighbor in his nearest interests. Dost thou see that it is wickedness that is unclean? He who had two wives was not unclean, and David who had many wives was not unclean. But when he had one unlawfully, he became unclean. Why?

Because he had injured and defrauded his neighbor. And the fornicator is not unclean on account of the intercourse, but on account of the manner of it, because it injures the woman, and they injure one another, making the woman common, and subverting the laws of nature. For she ought to be the wife of one man, since it is said, "Male and female created He them." (Gen. i. 27.) And, "they twain shall be one flesh." Not "those many," but "they twain shall be one flesh." Here then is injustice, and therefore the act is wicked. Again, when anger exceeds due measure, it makes a man unclean, not in itself, but because of its excess. Since it is not said, "He that is angry," merely, but "angry without a cause." Thus every way to desire overmuch is unclean, for it proceeds from a greedy and irrational disposition. Let us therefore be **sober** **Νήφωμεν τοίνυν**, I beseech you **παρακαλῶ**, let us be pure, in that which is real purity **καθαροὶ γενώμεθα τὴν ἀληθῇ καθαρότητα**, that we may be thought worthy to see God **ἵνα τὸν Θεὸν ἰδεῖν καταξιωθῶμεν**, through Jesus Christ our Lord **ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν**, with whom to the Father be glory, with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

**John Chrysostom, Homilies on Titus**

### **Homily III**

Ver. 6. "Young men likewise exhort to be soberminded."

See how he everywhere recommends the observance of decorum. For he has committed to women the greater part in the instruction of women, having appointed the elder to teach the younger. But the whole instruction of men he assigns to Titus himself. For nothing is so difficult for that age as to overcome unlawful pleasures. For neither the love of wealth, nor the desire of glory, or any other thing so much

solicits the young, as fleshly lust. Therefore passing over other things, he directs his admonition to that vital point. Not however that he would have other things neglected; for what says he?

Ver. 10. "Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Thus he has well said in another place, "Doing service as to the Lord, and not to men." For if thou servest thy master with good will, yet the occasion of this service proceeds from thy fear,<sup>46</sup> and he who with so great fear renders Him service, shall receive the greater reward. For if he restrain not his hand, or his unruly tongue, how shall the Gentile admire the doctrine that is among us? But if they see their slave, who has been taught the philosophy of Christ, displaying more self-command than their own philosophers, and serving with all meekness and good will, he will in every way admire the power of the Gospel. For the Greeks judge not of doctrines by the doctrine itself, but they make the life and conduct the test of the doctrines. Let women therefore and servants be their instructors by their conversation. For both among themselves, and everywhere, it is admitted that the race of servants is passionate, not open to impression, intractable, and not very apt to receive instruction in virtue, not from their nature, God forbid, but from their ill breeding,<sup>47</sup> and the neglect of their masters. For those who rule them care about nothing but their own service; or if they do sometimes attend to their morals, they do it only to spare themselves the trouble that would be caused them by their fornication, their thefts, or their

drunkenness, and being thus neglected and having no one to concern himself about them, they naturally sink into the very depths of wickedness. For if under the direction of a father and mother, a guardian, a master, and teacher, with suitable companions, with the honor of a free condition, and many other advantages, it is difficult to escape intimacies with the wicked, what can we expect from those who are destitute of all these, and are mixed up with the wicked, and associate fearlessly with whomsoever they will, no one troubling herself about their friendships? What sort of persons do we suppose they will be? On this account it is difficult for any servant to be good, especially when they have not the benefit of instruction either from those without or from ourselves. They do not converse with free men of orderly conduct, who have a great regard for their reputation. For all these reasons it is a difficult and surprising thing that there should ever be a good servant.

When therefore it is seen that the power of religion, imposing a restraint upon a class naturally so self-willed, has rendered them singularly well behaved and gentle, their masters, however unreasonable they may be, will form a high opinion of our doctrines. For it is manifest, that having previously infixed in their souls a fear of the Resurrection, of the Judgment, and of all those things which we are taught by our philosophy to expect after death, they have been able to resist wickedness, having in their souls a settled principle to counterbalance the pleasures of sin. So that it is not by chance or without reason, that Paul shows so much consideration for this class of men: since the more wicked they are, the more admirable is the power of that preaching which reforms them. For we then most admire a physician, when he restores to a healthy and sane state one who was

despaired of, whom nothing benefited, who was unable to command his unreasonable desires, and wallowed in them. And observe what he most requires of them; the qualities which contribute most to their masters' ease.

*Homily IV.*

Titus ii. 11-14

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, Teaching them that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Having demanded from servants so great virtue, for it is great virtue to adorn the doctrine of our God and Saviour in all things, and charged them to give no occasion of offense to their masters, even in common matters, he adds the just cause, why servants should be such: “For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared.” Those who have God for their Teacher,<sup>50</sup> may well be such as I have described, seeing their numberless sins have been forgiven to them. For you know that in addition to other considerations, this in no common degree awes and humbles the soul, that when it had innumerable sins to answer for, it received not punishment, but obtained pardon, and infinite favors. For if one, whose servant had committed many offenses, instead of scourging him with thongs, should grant him a pardon for all those, but should require an account of his future conduct, and bid him beware of falling into the same faults again, and should bestow high favors upon him,

who do you think would not be overcome at hearing of such kindness? But do not think that grace stops at the pardon of former sins – it secures us against them in future, for this also is of grace. Since if He were never to punish those who still do amiss, this would not be so much grace, as encouragement to evil and wickedness.

“For the grace of God,” he says, “hath appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world; looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” See, how together with the rewards he places the virtue. And this is of grace, to deliver us from worldly things, and to lead us to Heaven. He speaks here of two appearings; for there are two; the first of grace, the second of retribution and justice.

“That denying ungodliness,” he says, “and worldly lusts.”

See here the foundation of all virtue. He has not said “avoiding,” but “denying.” Denying implies the greatest distance, the greatest hatred and aversion. With as much resolution and zeal as they turned from idols, with so much let them turn from vice itself, and worldly lusts. For these too are idols, that is, worldly lusts, and covetousness, and this he names idolatry. Whatever things are useful for the present life are worldly lusts,<sup>51</sup> whatever things perish with the present life are worldly lusts. Let us then have nothing to do with these. Christ came, “that we should deny ungodliness.”<sup>52</sup> Ungodliness relates to doctrines, worldly lusts to a wicked life.

“And should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.”

Dost thou see, what I always affirm, that it is not sobriety only to abstain from fornication, but that we must be free from other passions. So then he who loves wealth is not **sober**. For as the fornicator loves women, so the other loves money, and even more inordinately, for he is not impelled by so strong a passion. And he is certainly a more powerless<sup>53</sup> charioteer who cannot manage a gentle horse, than he who cannot restrain a wild and unruly one. What then? says he, is the love of wealth weaker than the love of women? This is manifest from many reasons. In the first place, lust springs from the necessity of nature, and what arises from this necessity must be difficult to restrain, since it is implanted in our nature. Secondly, because the ancients had no regard for wealth, but for women they had great regard, in respect of their chastity. And no one blamed him who cohabited with his wife according to law, even to old age, but all blamed him who hoarded money. And many of the Heathen philosophers despised money, but none of them were indifferent to women, so that this passion is more imperious than the other. But since we are addressing the Church, let us not take our examples from the Heathens, but from the Scriptures. This then the blessed Paul places almost in the rank of a command. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."<sup>54</sup> (1 Tim. vi. 8.) But concerning women he says, "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent" – and "come together again." (1 Cor. vii. 5.) And you see him often laying down rules for a lawful intercourse, and he permits the enjoyment of this desire, and allows of a second marriage, and bestows much consideration upon the matter, and never punishes on account of it. But he everywhere condemns him that is fond of money. Concerning wealth also Christ often commanded

that we should avoid the corruption of it, but He says nothing about abstaining from a wife. For hear what He says concerning money; "Whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath" (Luke xiv. 33.); but he nowhere says, "Whosoever forsaketh not his wife"; for he knew how imperious that passion is. And the blessed Paul says, "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled" (Heb. xiii. 4.); but he has nowhere said that the care of riches is honorable, but the reverse. Thus he says to Timothy, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts." (1 Tim. vi. 9.) He says not, they that will be covetous, but, they that will be rich.

And that you may learn from the common notions the true state of this matter, it must be set before you generally. If a man were once for all deprived of money, he would no longer be tormented with the desire of it, for nothing so much causes the desire of wealth, as the possession of it. But it is not so with respect to lust, but many who have been made eunuchs have not been freed from the flame that burned within them, for the desire resides in other organs, being seated inwardly in our nature. To what purpose then is this said? Because the covetous is more intemperate than the fornicator, inasmuch as the former gives way to a weaker passion. Indeed it proceeds less from passion than from baseness of mind. But lust is natural, so that if a man does not approach a woman, nature performs her part and operation. But there is nothing of this sort in the case of avarice.

"That we should live godly in this present world."

And what is this hope? what the reward of our labors?

"Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing."



For nothing is more blessed and more desirable than that appearing. Words are not able to represent it, the blessings thereof surpass our understanding.

“Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour.”<sup>55</sup>

Where are those who say that the Son is inferior to the Father?

“Our great God and Saviour.” He who saved us when we were enemies. What will He not do then when He has us approved?<sup>56</sup>

“The great God.” When he says great with respect to God, he says it not comparatively but absolutely,<sup>57</sup> after Whom no one is great, since it is relative. For if it is relative, He is great by comparison, not great by nature. But now He is incomparably great.

Ver. 14. “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people.”

“Peculiar”: that is, selected from the rest, and having nothing in common with them.

“Zealous of good works.”

Dost thou see that our part is necessary, not merely works, but “zealous”; we should with all alacrity, with a becoming earnestness, go forward in virtue. For when we were weighed down with evils, and incurably diseased, it was of His lovingkindness that we were delivered. But what follows after this is our part as well as His.

Ver. 15. “These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.”

“These things speak and exhort.” Do you see how he charges Timothy? “Reprove, rebuke, exhort.” But here, “Rebuke with all authority.” For the manners of this people were more stubborn, wherefore he orders them to be rebuked more roughly, and with all authority. For there are some sins, which ought to be prevented by command. We may with persuasion advise men to despise riches, to be meek, and the like. But the adulterer, the fornicator, the defrauder, ought to be brought to a better course by command. And those who are addicted to augury and divination, and the like, should be corrected “with all authority.” Observe how he would have him insist on these things with independence, and with entire freedom.<sup>58</sup>

“Let no man despise thee.” But

Chap. iii. 1. “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers.”

What then? even when men do evil, may we not revile them? nay, but “to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man.” Hear the exhortation, “To speak evil of no man.” Our lips should be pure from reviling. For if our reproaches are true, it is not for us to utter them, but for the Judge to enquire into the matter. “For why,” he says, “dost thou judge thy brother?” (Rom. xiv. 10.) But if they are not true, how great the fire.<sup>59</sup> Hear what the thief says to his fellow-thief. “For we are also in the same condemnation.” (Luke xxiii. 40.) We are running the same hazard.<sup>60</sup> If thou revilest others, thou wilt soon fall into the same sins. Therefore the blessed Paul admonishes us: “Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. x. 12.)

“To be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.”

Unto Greeks and Jews, to the wicked and the evil. For when he says, “Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall,” he wakens their fears from the future; but here, on the contrary, he exhorts them from the consideration of the past, and the same in what follows;

Ver. 3. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish.”

Thus also he does in his Epistle to the Galatians, where he says, “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.” (Gal. iv. 4.) Therefore he says, Revile no one, for such also thou wast thyself.

“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

Therefore we ought to be thus to all, to be gently disposed.

For he who was formerly in such a state, and has been delivered from it, ought not to reproach others, but to pray, to be thankful to Him who has granted both to him and them deliverance from such evils. Let no one boast; for all have sinned. If then, doing well thyself, thou art inclined to revile others, consider thy own former life, and the uncertainty of the future, and restrain thy anger.<sup>61</sup> For if thou hast lived virtuously from thy earliest youth, yet nevertheless thou mayest have many sins; and if thou hast not, as thou thinkest, consider that this is not the effect of thy virtue, but of the grace of God. For if He had not called thy forefathers, thou wouldest have been disobedient. See here how he mentions every sort of wickedness. How many things has not God dispensed by the Prophets and all other means? have we heard?

“For we,” he says, “were once deceived.”

Ver. 4. “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared.” How? “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Strange! How were we drowned<sup>62</sup> in wickedness, so that we could not be purified, but needed a new birth? For this is implied by “Regeneration.” For as when a house is in a ruinous state no one places props under it, nor makes any addition to the old building, but pulls it down to its foundations, and rebuilds it anew; so in our case, God has not repaired us, but has made us anew. For this is “the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” He has made us new men. How? “By His Spirit”; and to show this further, he adds, Ver. 6. “Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”

Thus we need the Spirit abundantly.

“That being justified by His grace” — again by grace and not by debt — “we may be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

At the same time there is an incitement to humility, and a hope for the future. For if when we were so abandoned, as to require to be born again, to be saved by grace, to have no good in us, if then He saved us, much more will He save us in the world to come.

For nothing was worse than the brutality of mankind before the coming of Christ. They were all affected towards each other as if enemies and at war. Fathers slew their own sons, and mothers were mad against their children. There was no order settled, no natural, no written law; everything was

subverted. There were adulteries continually, and murders, and things if possible worse than murders, and thefts; indeed we are told by one of the heathen, that this practice was esteemed a point of virtue. And naturally, since they worshiped a god<sup>63</sup> of such character. Their oracles frequently required them to put such and such men to death. Let me tell you one of the stories of that time. One Androgeus, the son of Minos, coming to Athens, obtained a victory in wrestling, for which he was punished and put to death. Apollo therefore, remedying one evil by another, ordered twice seven youths to be executed on his account. What could be more savage than this tyrannical command? And it was executed too. A man undertook to atone the mad rage of the demon, and slew these young men, because the deceit of the oracle prevailed with them. But afterwards, when the young men resisted and stood upon their defense, it was no longer done. If now it had been just, it ought not to have been prevented, but if unjust, as undoubtedly it was, it ought not to have been commanded at all. Then they worshiped boxers and wrestlers. They waged constant wars in perpetual succession, city by city, village by village, house by house. They were addicted to the love of boys, and one of their wise men made a law that Pædrasty, as well as anointing for wrestling,<sup>64</sup> should not be allowed to slaves, as if it was an honorable thing; and they had houses for this purpose, in which it was openly practiced. And if all that was done among them was related, it would be seen that they openly outraged nature, and there was none to restrain them. Then their dramas were replete with adultery, lewdness, and corruption of every sort. In their indecent nocturnal assemblies, women were admitted to the spectacle. There was seen the abomination of a virgin sitting

in the theater during the night, amidst a drunken multitude of young men madly reveling. The very festival was the darkness, and the abominable deeds practiced by them. On this account he says, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures." One man loved his stepmother,<sup>65</sup> a woman her step-son, and in consequence hung herself. For as to their passion for boys, whom they called their "Pædica," it is not fit to be named. And would you see a son married to his mother? This too happened among them, and what is horrible, though it was done in ignorance, the god whom they worshiped did not prevent it, but permitted this outrage to nature to be committed, and that though she was a person of distinction. And if those, who, if for no other reason, yet for the sake of their reputation with the multitude, might have been expected to adhere to virtue; if they rushed thus headlong into vice, what is it likely was the conduct of the greater part, who lived in obscurity? What is more diversified than this pleasure? The wife of a certain one fell in love with another man, and with the help of her adulterer, slew her husband upon his return. The greater part of you probably know the story. The son of the murdered man killed the adulterer, and after him his mother, then he himself became mad, and was haunted by furies. After this the madman himself slew another man, and took his wife. What can be worse than such calamities as these? But I mention these instances taken from the Heathens,<sup>66</sup> with this view, that I may convince the Gentiles, what evils then prevailed in the world. But we may show the same from our own writings. For it is said, "They sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils." (Ps. cvi. 37.) Again, the Sodomites were destroyed for no other cause than their

unnatural appetites. Soon after the coming of Christ, did not a king's daughter dance at a banquet in the presence of drunken men, and did she not ask as the reward of her dancing the murder and the head of a Prophet? "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?" (Ps. vi. 2.)

"Hateful," he says, "and hating one another." For it must necessarily happen, when we let loose every pleasure on the soul, that there should be much hatred. For where love is, with virtue, no man overreacheth another in any matter.

Mark also what Paul says, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) Dost thou see how every species of wickedness prevailed? It was a state of gross darkness, and the corruption of all that was right. For if those who had the advantage of prophecies, and who saw so many evils inflicted upon their enemies, and even upon themselves, nevertheless did not restrain themselves, but committed numberless foolish crimes, what would be the case with others? One of their lawgivers ordered that virgins should wrestle naked in the presence of men. Many blessings on you! that ye cannot endure the mention of it; but their philosophers were not ashamed of the actual practice. Another, the chief of their philosophers, approves of their going out to the war, and of their being common,<sup>67</sup> as if he were a pimp and pander to their lusts.

"Living in malice and envy."

For if those who professed philosophy among them made such laws, what shall we say of those who were not philosophers? If such were the maxims of those who wore a long beard, and assumed the grave cloak,<sup>68</sup> what can be said

of others? Woman was not made for this, O man, to be prostituted as common. O ye subverters of all decency, who use men, as if they were women, and lead out women to war, as if they were men! This is the work of the devil, to subvert and confound all things, to overleap the boundaries that have been appointed from the beginning, and remove those which God has set to nature. For God assigned to woman the care of the house only, to man the conduct of public affairs. But you reduce the head to the feet, and raise the feet to the head. You suffer women to bear arms, and are not ashamed. But why do I mention these things? They introduce on the stage a woman that murders her own children, nor are they ashamed to stuff the ears of men with such abominable stories.

Ver. 4. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

What means, "according to the hope"? That, as we have hoped, so we shall enjoy eternal life, or because ye are even already heirs.

"This is a faithful saying."

Because he had been speaking of things future and not of the present, therefore he adds, that it is worthy of credit. These things are true, he says, and this is manifest from what has gone before. For He who has delivered us from such a state of iniquity, and from so many evils, will assuredly impart to



us the good things to come, if we abide in grace. For all proceeds from the same kind concern.

Moral. Let us then give thanks to God, and not revile them; nor accuse them, but rather let us beseech them, pray for them, counsel and advise them, though they should insult and spurn us. For such is the nature of those who are diseased.<sup>69</sup> But those who are concerned for the health of such persons do all things and bear all things, though it may not avail, that they may not have themselves to accuse of negligence. Know ye not that often, when a physician despairs of a sick man, some relative standing by addresses him, "Bestow further attendance, leave nothing undone, that I may not have to accuse myself, that I may incur no blame,<sup>70</sup> no self-reproach." Do you not see the great care that near kinsmen take of their relations, how much they do for them, both entreating the physicians to cure them, and sitting perseveringly beside them? Let us at least imitate them. And yet there is no comparison between the objects of our concern. For if any one had a son diseased in his body, he could not refuse to take a long journey to free him from his disease. But when the soul is in a bad state, no one concerns himself about it, but we all are indolent, all careless, all negligent, and overlook our wives, our children, and ourselves, when attacked<sup>71</sup> by this dangerous disease. But when it is too late, we become sensible of it. Consider how disgraceful and absurd it is to say afterwards, "we never looked for it, we never expected that this would be the event." And it is no less dangerous than disgraceful. For if in the present life it is the part of foolish men to make no provision for the future, much more must it be so with respect to the next life, when we hear many counseling us, and informing us what is to be done, and what not to be

done. Let us then hold fast that hope.<sup>72</sup> Let us be careful of our salvation, let us in all things call upon God, that He may stretch forth His hand to us. How long will you be slothful?

How long negligent? How long shall we be careless of ourselves and of our fellow-servants? He hath shed richly upon us the grace of His Spirit. Let us therefore consider how great is the grace he has bestowed upon us, and let us show as great earnestness ourselves, or, since this is not possible, some, although it be less. For if after this grace we are insensible, the heavier will be our punishment. "For if I," He says, "had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." (John xv. 22.) But God forbid that this should be said of us, and grant that we may all be thought worthy of the blessings promised to those who have loved Him, in Jesus Christ our Lord

### Illumination ἑλλάμψις

Palamas' argument was based on the words of Christ, 'blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God' (Mth. 5:8). He understood this beatitude in a most literal sense. He argued, 'for it is those who have a clean heart that see God, according to the infallible beatitude of the Lord'. The parable which speaks about the cleansing of the cup, he understood in the same way, and that cup was the heart. Palamas accepts that anyone can know about God, even those who have an unclean heart. However, in order to receive

illumination (ἐλλαμψις) from God the heart must first be purified.

How does Palamas understand the process of cleansing one's heart? It is commonplace in the ascetic tradition that the passions pollute man and obstruct him from drawing near to God. Palamas tells us that, 'the mind while still passion-dominated cannot be united to God'. Along with prayer and ascetic struggle, man needs to reach ἀπάθεια in order to cleanse his heart. Ἀπάθεια literally translates passionlessness, which can be misleading. A monk does try to mortify his passions. However, apart from harmful passions there are also positive ones which are necessary in the ascetics effort to reach ἀπάθεια, such as anger, when used against sin and evil, and love of neighbour and God. Therefore, the ἀπάθεια Palamas speaks about must not be confused with a Stoic-like killing of all the passions. Palamas did not subscribe at all to the idea that man must completely mortify the passionate part of his soul, as his adversaries believed. He says: We have not been taught that the killing of the passionate power of the soul is passionlessness, but its transformation from the lower to the higher...having turned away completely from the wicked and turned towards the good.

Palamas believes that the passionate part of man's soul must be presented to God 'alive' as a sacrifice, in the same way that the apostle Paul exhorts the Christians to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice (rom 12-1 ). With ἀπάθεια

the soul becomes sufficiently detached from earthly attraction to be able to contemplate and pray with uninterrupted mind. From very early on the 'pure of heart' have been identified in Christian spirituality with those who have obtained the gift of ἀπάθεια. Overlooking its etymological meaning, ἀπάθεια constitutes a divine passion. Ἀπάθεια is a state of self-mastery and attention, which brings to mind the νήπις we spoke about. Its best rendering would be 'freedom from the domination by the passions'. In the heart - the inner man - is the place par excellence where prayer takes place. Palamas reiterates the words of the apostle who tells us that it is in the heart one cries, 'abba father' (gal 4:6). The heart is also the place where true faith resides. Palamas's opponents gave special emphasis to the need of acquiring knowledge in order to be saved. In response, Palamas says: He that has in his heart the knowledge of beings (ἡ γνώσις τῶν ὄντων), does not have, due to this, God inside himself, but he that has believed in the Lord Jesus in his heart with honest faith, has God enthroned in his heart. Almost everything Palamas says about the heart is directly related to Scripture. For the above, he slightly paraphrases Rom. 10:9. Within the same framework of defence Palamas quotes the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians, 'Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart'. It seems Palamas wants to stress the direct contact in the heart

between man and God. Once man has thus ‘found his heart’ he no longer needs the word of God directing his actions, for he has God himself telling him how to act. Palamas wants to underline that God is not known through knowledge of created things but through direct experience with God in the heart.

### Homily VIII.

Matt. II. 2.

*“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother.”* <sup>328</sup>

How then saith Luke, that He was lying in the manger? Because at the birth indeed she presently laid Him there (for, as was not unlikely, in that large assemblage for the taxing, they could find no house; which Luke also signifies, by saying, “Because there was no room, she laid Him” there); but afterwards she took Him up, and held Him on her knees.

For no sooner was she arrived at Bethlehem than she brought her pangs to an end,<sup>329</sup> that thou mayest thence also learn the whole dispensation, and that these things were not done at random, or by chance, but that they all were in course of accomplishment, according to some Divine foreknowledge, and prophetic order.

But what was it that induced them to worship? For neither was the Virgin conspicuous, nor the house distinguished, nor was any other of the things which they saw apt to amaze or attract them. Yet they not only worship, but also “open their treasures,” and “offer gifts;” and gifts, not as to a man, but as to God. For the frankincense and the myrrh were a symbol of this. What then was their inducement? That which wrought upon them to set out from home and to come so

long a journey; and this was both the star, and the illumination wrought of God in their mind καὶ ἡ παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ γενομένη τῇ διανοίᾳ αὐτῶν ἔλλαμψις, guiding them by little and little to the more perfect knowledge.

*John Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*

Οὗ γὰρ φόβος, ἐντολῶν τήρησις: οὗ δὲ ἐντολῶν τήρησις, σαρκὸς κάθαρσις, τοῦ ἐπιπροσθοῦντος τῇ ψυχῇ νέφους, καὶ οὐκ ἐῶντος καθαρῶς ἰδεῖν τὴν θείαν ἀκτῖνα: οὗ δὲ κάθαρσις, ἔλλαμψις: ἔλλαμψις δὲ, πόθου πλήρωσις, τοῖς τῶν μεγίστων, ἢ τοῦ μεγίστου, ἢ ὑπὲρ τὸ μέγα ἐφιεμένοις.

For where fear is there is keeping of commandments; and where there is keeping of commandments there is purifying of the flesh, that cloud which covers the soul and suffers it not to see the Divine Ray. And where there is purifying there is Illumination; and Illumination is the satisfying of desire to those who long for the greatest things, or the Greatest Thing, or That Which surpasses all greatness

*Gregory Nazianzen, Oration on the Holy Lights.*

ΙΑ΄. Τοῦτο ἐνήργει, πρότερον μὲν ἐν ταῖς ἀγγελικαῖς καὶ οὐρανίοις δυνάμεσι, καὶ ὅσαι πρῶται μετὰ Θεὸν, καὶ περὶ Θεόν. Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλοθεν αὐταῖς ἡ τελείωσις καὶ ἡ ἔλλαμψις, καὶ τὸ πρὸς κακίαν δυσκίνητον, ἢ ἀκίνητον, ἢ παρὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος

XI. He wrought first in the heavenly and angelic powers, and such as are first after God and around God. For from no other source flows their perfection and their brightness, and

the difficulty or impossibility of moving them to sin, but  
from the Holy Ghost

**Gregory Nazianzen, On Pentecost.**

ΚΓ'. Κρείσσω μὲν οὖν εὖ οἶδα καὶ μακρῷ τιμιώτερα τὰ  
παρόντα σοι νῦν ἢ κατὰ τὰ ὁρώμενα, ἦχος ἑορταζόντων,  
ἀγγέλων χορεία, τάξις οὐρανία, δόξης θεωρία, τῆς τε ἄλλης  
καὶ τῆς ἀνωτάτῳ Τριάδος **ἔλλαμψις** καθαρωτέρα τε καὶ  
τελεωτέρα, μηκέτι ὑποφευγούσης τὸν δέσμιον νοῦν καὶ  
διαχεόμενον ταῖς αἰσθήσεσιν, ἀλλ' ὅλης ὅλῳ νοῖ  
θεωρουμένης τε καὶ κρατουμένης, καὶ προσαστραπτούσης  
ταῖς ἡμετέραις ψυχαῖς ὅλῳ τῷ φωτὶ τῆς θεότητος

23. Better, I know well, and far more precious than eye can  
see, is thy present lot, the song of them that keep holy-  
day,<sup>23</sup> the throng of angels, the heavenly host, the vision of  
glory, and that splendour, pure and perfect beyond all other,  
of the Trinity Most High, no longer beyond the ken of the  
captive mind, dissipated by the senses, but entirely  
contemplated and possessed by the undivided mind, and  
flashing upon our souls with the whole light of Godhead:

**Gregory Nazianzen, On his Sister Gorgonia.**

Προσθήσω δέ, ὅτι καὶ τῶν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πεποιημένων πατήρ  
(κυριώτερον γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐστὶ πατήρ ὁ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων εἰς τὸ  
εἶναι παραγαγὼν ἢ οἱ γεννήσαντες οἱ ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ εἶναι  
καὶ τὸ γεννᾶν εἰληφότες), τῶν ἐπομένων καὶ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ  
ποιμαινομένων ποιμήν, τῶν φωτιζομένων **ἔλλαμψις**, τῶν  
τελουμένων τελεταρχία, τῶν θεουμένων θεαρχία, τῶν

διεστώτων εἰρήνη καὶ τῶν ἀπλουμένων ἀπλότης καὶ τῶν  
ἐνιζομένων ἐνότης, ἀρχῆς ἀπάσης ὑπερούσιος καὶ ὑπάρχιος  
ἀρχὴ καὶ τοῦ κρυφίου ἥτοι τῆς αὐτοῦ γνώσεως κατὰ τὸ  
θεμιτὸν καὶ ἐφικτὸν ἐκάστῳ ἀγαθὴ μετάδοσις».

And I shall add He is also the Father of all His creatures (for  
God, Who brought us into being out of nothing, is in a  
stricter sense our Father than are our parents who have  
derived both being and begetting from Him<sup>195</sup>): the  
shepherd of those who follow and are tended by Him: the  
radiance of those who are enlightened: the initiation of the  
initiated: the deification of the deified: the peace of those at  
discord: the simplicity of those who love simplicity: the  
unity of those who worship unity: of all beginning the  
beginning, super-essential because above all beginning<sup>196</sup>:  
and the good revelation of what is hidden, that is, of the  
knowledge of Him so far as that is proper for and attainable  
by each.

John of Damascus, *Expositio fidei*



## ἑλλαμψις IN PATRISTIC LEGACY

Gregorius Palamas Thessalonicensis Metropolita · tomos 2

Gregory Nazianzen · On Pentecost. (orig)

Gregory Nazianzen · Oration on the Holy Lights.

Leo Presbyter · In nativitatem Christi (orig)

Maximus Confessor · PG 91A 3

Symeonis Junioris · Catechesae (orig)

Symeonis Junioris · Catecheses et Gratiae (orig)

Cyril of Alexandria · De sancta trinitate (orig)

Maximus Confessor · Saint Maximus PG 91 (orig)

Gregory of Nazianzus · In laudem Cypriani (orig)

Gregory of Nazianzus · In pentecosten (orig)

Symeonis Junioris · Catecheses et Gratiae (orig)

Gregory of Nazianzus · In sancta lumina (orig)

Gregory Nazianzen · On his Sister Gorgonia. (orig)

Symeonis Junioris · Theologica (orig)

Constantinus Porphyrogenitus · Oratio de translatione  
Chrysostomi (orig)

Gregory of Nazianzus · De moderatione in  
disputando (orig)

Proclus · Institutio theologica (orig)

Maximus Confessor · PG 91A 4

John of Damascus · Epistula de hymno trisagio

Oecumenius · Commentarius in Apocalypsin (orig)

John Of Damascus · The Fount of Knowledge III: On the  
Orthodox Faith. (orig)

John of Damascus · Expositio fidei (orig)

Macarius of Egypt · Sermones 64 (orig)

Dionysius Aeropagita · De ecclesiastica hierarchia (orig)

Gregorius Palamas Thessalonicensis Metropolita · tomos 1

Symeonis Junioris · Epistulae (orig)

Gregory of Nyssa · In Canticum canticorum (orig)

Theodorus Studita · Epistulae (orig)

Dionysius Aeropagita · De divinis nominibus (orig)

Maximus Confessor · PG 91A 7 (orig)

Gregory of Nyssa · In inscriptiones Psalmorum

Didymus the Blind · Fragmenta in Psalmos (orig)

Procopius of Gaza · Catena in Canticum canticorum (orig)

Maximus Confessor · PG 91A 5 (orig)

Eusebius Caesariensis · Demonstratio evangelica (orig)

**John Chrysostom · Homilies on the Gospel of  
Matthew (orig)**